

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 186

By Shepard

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Johnny Majors for his meritorious service to the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as legends in the annals of collegiate athletics in Tennessee and as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Majors is one such estimable Tennessean who not only led the University of Tennessee Volunteers to a perfect season and a number two ranking in 1956 as an All-American tailback but also returned to his alma mater in 1977 to assume the position of Head Coach, in which capacity he brought even greater fame to that powerhouse of Southeastern Conference (SEC) football; and

WHEREAS, in Lynchburg, on May 21, 1935, John Terrill Majors was born into what would become known as the most famous football family in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, his father, the late Shirley Majors, was a successful high school football coach for thirteen years; he later assumed the position of Head Coach at the University of the South (Sewanee), where he compiled a record of 93-74-5 over the course of his twenty-one years there; and

WHEREAS, before his father would move to Sewanee to begin his college coaching career, Johnny Majors played for him at Huntland High School scoring an amazing 565 points during his high school career, surely making his head coach and father proud; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Huntland, Johnny Majors went on to play football at Knoxville, but he was not the only Majors to play college ball; two brothers, Bill and Bobby, were

also great stars at Tennessee, while his brother Joe starred at Florida State, and his brother Larry played at Sewanee for his father; and

WHEREAS, despite all the competition for fame within his own family, Johnny Majors was a true standout at Knoxville; in addition to the perfect season and the number two ranking in 1956, Johnny Majors enjoyed a trip to the Sugar Bowl with his teammates that year; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Majors was also named the 1956 Back of the Year by the United Press International (UPI) and finished second to Notre Dame's Paul Hornung in the Heisman Trophy balloting; and

WHEREAS, in his years as a player, he was twice named SEC Most Valuable Player; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Johnny Majors began his coaching career as an assistant at his alma mater, and he went on to serve as an assistant coach at Mississippi State from 1960 to 1963 and at Arkansas from 1964 to 1967; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, Coach Majors was appointed Head Coach at Iowa State University, where he took a thoroughly downtrodden team and turned it completely around in just five years, leading the Cyclones to two bowl games; before his arrival, Iowa State had never been to a bowl game; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his great success at Iowa State, the UPI and the Associated Press (AP) named Head Coach Johnny Majors Big Eight Coach of the Year in 1971; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Majors took on yet another immense challenge in 1973, when he became Head Coach of the University of Pittsburgh Panthers, a team that had finished the previous season with a dismal 1-10 record; and

WHEREAS, again, as he had with the Iowa State Cyclones, Johnny Majors transformed a struggling team into a force to be reckoned with; in 1973, he put Pitt back on track with a winning season, the first in eleven years, and a berth in the Fiesta Bowl; and

WHEREAS, that same year, Coach Majors earned Coach of the Year honors from the Football Writers Association and the Walter Camp Foundation; and

WHEREAS, 1973 was a great year for another Majors family coach: the Football Writers Association named Johnny's father Shirley the Small College Coach of the Year for his work at Sewanee; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, the Panthers enjoyed their first appearance on national television since 1963 and a second winning season; the following year, they fought their way to number fifteen in the AP rankings, an 8-4 season, and a victory over Kansas in the Sun Bowl; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, after four seasons under Head Coach Majors, the Panthers won the national championship by defeating the Georgia Bulldogs 27-3 in the Sugar Bowl; Johnny Majors was again named Coach of the Year; and

WHEREAS, his recruiting success at Pitt brought Coach Majors into contact with some of football's greats: running back Tony Dorsett, who won the Heisman Trophy in 1976; quarterback Matt Cavanaugh, who has served a number of college and professional teams as a coach and offensive coordinator; defensive linemen Al Romano, Gary Burley, Don Parrish, and Randy Holloway; tight end Jim Corbett; linebackers Cecil Johnson and Arnie Weatherington; and wide receiver Gordon Jones; and

WHEREAS, after much success in his four years at Pitt, he decided in 1977 to return to his alma mater, where yet another moribund football team was in need of rejuvenation; and

WHEREAS, in his sixteen seasons as Head Coach of the Tennessee Vols, Johnny Majors led his team to SEC championships in 1985, 1989, and 1990, and the Vols earned invitations to the Garden State, Peach (twice), Florida Citrus, Sun, Sugar (twice), Liberty, Fiesta, and Hall of Fame Bowls; and

WHEREAS, twenty years after he first arrived at the University of Pittsburg, Johnny Majors returned to coach the Panthers in 1993, and he remained there for four seasons, recruiting a winning squad that ultimately made its way to the Liberty Bowl in 1997 and back to football greatness; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his storied coaching career, Johnny Majors has won countless awards and accolades over and above those already named; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Johnny Majors and the rest of his immediate family were made charter inductees of the Tennessee Hall of Fame and in 1975, Coach Majors was named to the Twenty-five-year All-SEC Team for 1950 to 1974; and

WHEREAS, Coach Johnny Majors served as President of the American Football Coaches Association in 1990, a year in which Tennessee's SEC title gave the school its first back-to-back conference championships since the Volunteers won three in a row from 1938 to 1940; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, he was the first coach ever to be inducted in the Sun Bowl Hall of Fame; he remains the only coach in the history of the Sun Bowl to take three different teams to the El Paso bowl game; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, he became only one of three coaches ever selected for the Peach Bowl Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Coach Majors posted an overall record of 185-137-10 for his twenty-nine-year career; sixteen of his twenty-nine teams earned bowl invitations, and his overall bowl record was 9-7; and

WHEREAS, he coached or recruited twenty-three All-Americans as well as twenty-three number-one National Football League draft picks; and

WHEREAS, Coach Majors has taken scores of young men and molded them into determined, disciplined winners, and he has left an indelible mark on the game of football; and

WHEREAS, although Johnny Majors has left the world of college football coaching, he continues to apply his great skill as a leader to other endeavors; he directs "John Majors Charities" and sits on the boards of the HOPE Network and the Pittsburgh Symphony; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Majors enjoys the loving companionship of his wife, Mary Lynn, and together they have a son, John, a daughter, Mary, and one grandson, Brandon; and

WHEREAS, Coach Johnny Majors epitomizes the spirit of hard work and commitment to excellence that are characteristic of all true Tennesseans; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Coach Johnny Majors for his meritorious

service to the good people of the State through his laudable career with the University of Tennessee, thank him for acting as a most distinguished ambassador of Tennessee in his many successful seasons as a college football coach elsewhere, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.